



## 1999 Children's Groundwater Festival



Nebraska Lt. Governor, Dave Maurstad, has a giant bubble pulled around him by NRC staff member Rich Kern at the 1999 Children's Groundwater Festival.

Nebraskans as well as numerous other young students from around the world who attended this unique festival. The fourth thru six grade students arrive from com-

*Continued on page 2*

## Update on Republican River Litigation

By Jim Cook

Since our last report on the Kansas lawsuit against Nebraska concerning the Republican River Compact, there have been two major developments. **First**, the United States Supreme Court decided to accept the case, rejecting Nebraska's argument that jurisdiction should be refused. **Secondly**, Attorney General Stenberg's office completed and filed Nebraska's answer to the Kansas allegations. That filing, which was made on April 16, 1999 set forth a total of sixteen affirmative defenses to the Kansas complaint and also counterclaimed by suing Kansas for alleged Kansas violations of the Compact.

*Continued on page 5*

## Cooperative SSURGO Effort

In April of 1997 the University of Nebraska-Conservation and Survey Division (CSD), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission (NNRC) entered into an agreement to digitize Nebraska's published soil surveys. Funding for the project was to be divided between cooperative agencies. The overall goal of the project is to develop a **Digital Soils Base** of all 93 Nebraska counties and incorporate updated surveys, as they become available.

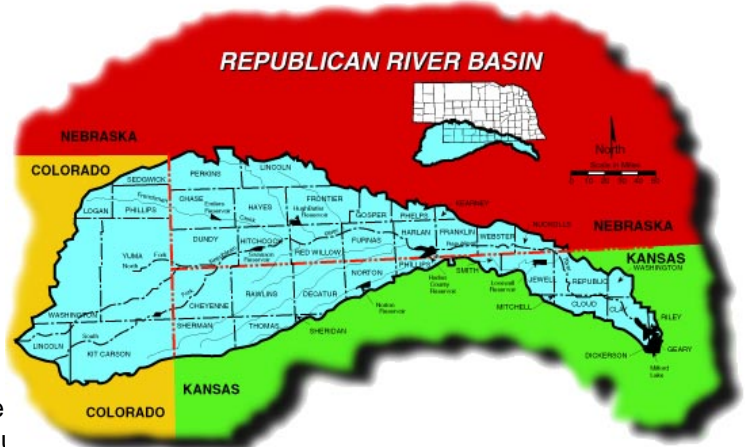
Once digitized the file can be adjusted in scale



making it easier to integrate the soils data with other geographic data. A time frame for the project was set at five years and is to be completed by September 30, 2002.

Since orthophotography is the desired base in compiling soils maps, the NNRC agreed to create the needed files from 1993 National Aerial Photography Program photography and submitted those files to the National Cartographic & Geospatial Center in Fort Worth, Texas for hard copy (mylar) productions. NRCS then com-

*Continued on page 5*



## DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS



### A Century of Cooperation

Nineteen hundred and ninety-nine marks the centennial year for soil surveys. The Agricultural Appropriations Act of 1896 authorized the Federal Government to conduct "...investigations of soils and their relationship to climate and organic life, and the development of methods to determine texture and composition of soils in the field and laboratory." Plans began immediately to forge partnerships with land grant universities and States to study and inventory the Nation's soils. By 1899, the first field surveys were being conducted in five different states, New Mexico, Utah, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maryland.

What a challenge it must have been as the originators of this effort set out to map all soils in the United States. They knew it would take time, but at least they had a goal that was achievable, and no doubt many felt when they got the job done their long range goal would be completed. Almost 50 years after the program started it became clear that a scientific system to classify and name soils was needed to properly coordinate a nation soil survey program. Thus, the second generation of soil surveys was initiated in the 1950's.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership for the Nebraska effort with significant input from the Conservation and Survey Division at UN-L. The Natural Resources Commission, Natural Resources Districts and numerous counties have contributed financially over many years to assure adequate soils information was available. After a long and tedious, but careful effort all of the land in the State of Nebraska now has a "modern" soil survey. The effort was finished during the past two years with Cherry County being the last in the state to get mapped.

Today, there is even a more intense program by the three agencies to assure all soils information is in a digital format that will meet national standards and "computer" ready so to speak. Another big task to be completed early in the next century.

As we look back 100 years, I am sure it took a great deal of encouragement from a pioneer soil scientist to convince a farmer that the soil information would be helpful in his farming operation. The situation is much different today - we have farmers that stop by the office and ask, "How soon can we get the soils information for my farm on a compact disc?" Like most things, significant changes have taken place during the span of 100 years but the original partners are still intact and going strong with a sense of urgency to supply critical information to those that need it in the most convenient and usable form.

I certainly agree with NRCS Chief Pearlie Reed who said recently, "In this centennial year, we look back to the many dedicated people who have helped make the National Cooperative Soil Survey a success."



—(Children's Groundwater Festival Con't)—

### Children's Groundwater Festival

AWESOME AQUIFER



munities all across Nebraska and take part in a variety of hands-on exercises, activities, and classroom discussions dealing with groundwater and groundwater related issues. Staff members of the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission were among the over 350 presenters and volunteers utilized this year to help attending students become aware of the importance of groundwater. Influenced by the Children's Groundwater Festival, numerous other schools, communities, states, and nations around the world have modeled their own festival after the standards and experiences enjoyed while attending one of the Children's Groundwater Festivals here in Nebraska. The Groundwater Foundation continues to be a very strong tool in bringing the importance of groundwater to light worldwide.

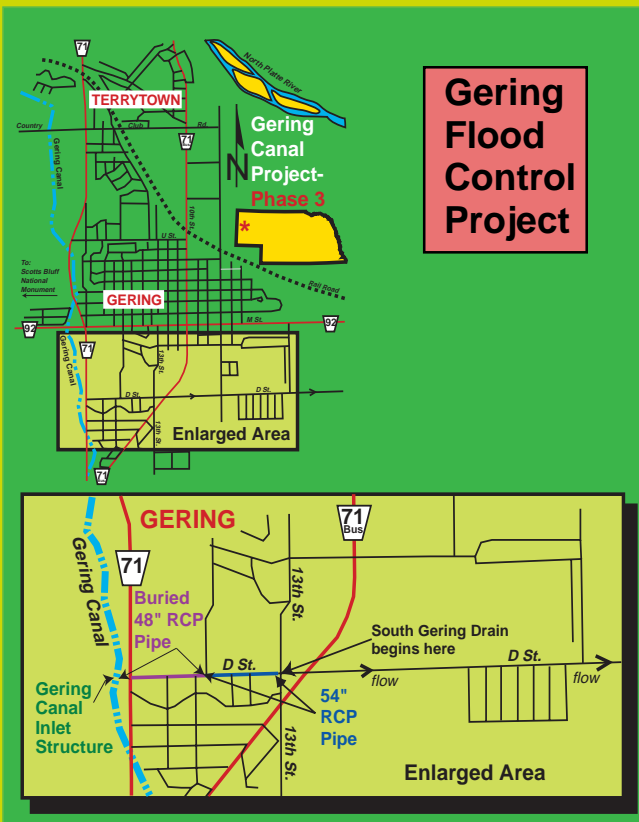
**For additional Information** on the Children's Groundwater Festival contact the **Groundwater Foundation, P.O. Box 22558, Lincoln, Nebraska 68542-2558** or call **1-800-858-4844** or visit their homepage at **[www.groundwater.org](http://www.groundwater.org)**.

## Flood Control Project In Gering Approved

By Tom Pesek

At its May 6, 1999, meeting, the Natural Resources Commission approved a **Nebraska Resources Development Fund grant of \$197,717** for the **Gering Canal Phase 3 Project**. The City of Gering is sponsor of this flood control project which will provide significant relief from Gering Canal overflows along the west side of the city. During heavy rainfall events, runoff from the area between Scotts Bluff National Monument and the city enters the canal and can cause overtopping which crosses Highway 71 and floods residential areas in Gering. An inlet structure in the east side of the canal will direct excess flows to a reinforced concrete pipe which will be installed under highway 71 and D Street and eventually outlet to South Gering Drain (see map below).

This project was planned by the Panhandle RC&D and the Natural Resources Conservation Service in cooperation with the Gering Irrigation District. Construction is expected to begin this spring and should be completed this year.



## Governor Mike Johanns Appoints Three New Commission Members



The Nebraska Natural Resources Commission consists of sixteen members. Thirteen of the sixteen members are selected to four-year terms at caucuses of Natural Resources District directors and represent the interests of Nebraska river basins. The remaining three members are appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Legislature, and represent the specific resource interests of municipal water users, surface water irrigators and ground water irrigators.

**Roger Korell**

**Representing: Surface Water Irrigators**

**Hometown: Bayard**

Governor Mike Johanns has appointed Roger Korell to represent the interests of Nebraska's surface water irrigators on the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission. Roger is a retired farmer/cattleman from the Bayard area



who operated approximately 1700 acres, he is also a Director with the Pathfinder Irrigation District. A victim of polio at the age of eight, leaving his left leg paralyzed, Roger feels very blessed to have been able to farm for 40 years. Describing himself as "a pretty average sort of guy", Roger is very interested in the education we provide one of our most important resource, our children.

He enjoys living in Nebraska and spending time with his children and grandchildren. He and his wife Pat, are grandparent to a Bayard second grade class, visiting the classroom once a week.

Along with surface water Roger has an interest in flood prevention. "Being a farmer all my life I've been interested in water and irrigation, it's critically important to our state, Nebraska would not be where it is today without our water." Roger, went on to say "I've also seen the damage and hardship that floods can cause and have an interest in flood control. I've seen the excellent results of flood control projects that have helped some communities in the state."

Continued on page 4



**Wayne Madsen****Representing: Ground Water Irrigators****Hometown: Trenton**

Wayne Madsen is the newly appointed member to the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission to represent the interests of Nebraska's ground water irrigators. Wayne, a Trenton native, spent forty plus years working in the well service profession installing ground water pumps in southwestern Nebraska and now does groundwater consulting work. He started his own well business in 1957 shortly upon returning to Trenton after serving in the Air Force from 1950-1954. He and his wife Jean, enjoy living the southwest Nebraska and like the area and it's beauty. He presently serves on the Middle Republican NRD Board of Directors, is Director on the Nebraska Water Resources Board, past president of the Nebraska Well Drillers Association, served on the Water Well Standards and Contractors Licensing Board and is active on the Groundwater Foundation's Program Committee. Most of Wayne's past is associated with ground water in one form or another and that may explain his deep commitment to preserving and protecting this resource. Wayne believes strongly in doing what is right for the state and it's citizens as a whole,

*"I think it is important that people put the needs of the state ahead of one's own desires and interests. In the past we have sometimes not been good stewards of our water. The rational of we have always done that, or done it this way no longer works. I encourage everyone to become more knowledgeable and that develops a respect. Knowledge is something that can not be taken away."*

**Jim Van Marter****Representing: Municipal Water Users****Hometown: Holdrege**

Governor Mike Johanns has appointed Jim Van Marter to represent the interests of Nebraska's municipal water users on the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission. Born and raised in Monesson, Pennsylvania Jim moved to Nebraska in 1949 after serving in the Air force and marrying a young lady named Delores from Nebraska. Jim taught school for 38 years teaching in Beaver City, Sargent and Holdrege.

As a former mayor of Holdrege, Jim knows how important water is to Nebraska's municipalities. *"Nebraska has excellent people resources and natural resources, water especially. We need to take care of and preserve our resources along with putting them to good use."* With his civic background, Jim feels giving back to communities is important and admires people that assume responsibility for their own actions.

In his spare time Jim likes golfing, reading, gardening and both he and Delores enjoy traveling. He is a member of the Holdrege Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, and an Elder in church.

The Nebraska Natural Resources Commission members and staff welcome the three newly appointed members and look forward to working with them to help preserve, protect, and utilize the state's natural resources

**Municipal Water Users****Surface Water Irrigators****Ground Water Irrigators**

*(Cooperative SSURGO Effort Con't)*

piled existing soil data, soils lines and symbols, to the ortho mylar base. After the soil lines and symbols are compiled and transferred to mylars they are delivered to the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission for scanning and digitizing. Personnel from all three cooperating agencies were responsible for the scanning and digitizing process with the NRCS staff member, a Soil Scientist, having authority to make soil mapping decisions in the event they arose. The end result is digitized soils information on an accurate updated digital ortho photograph.

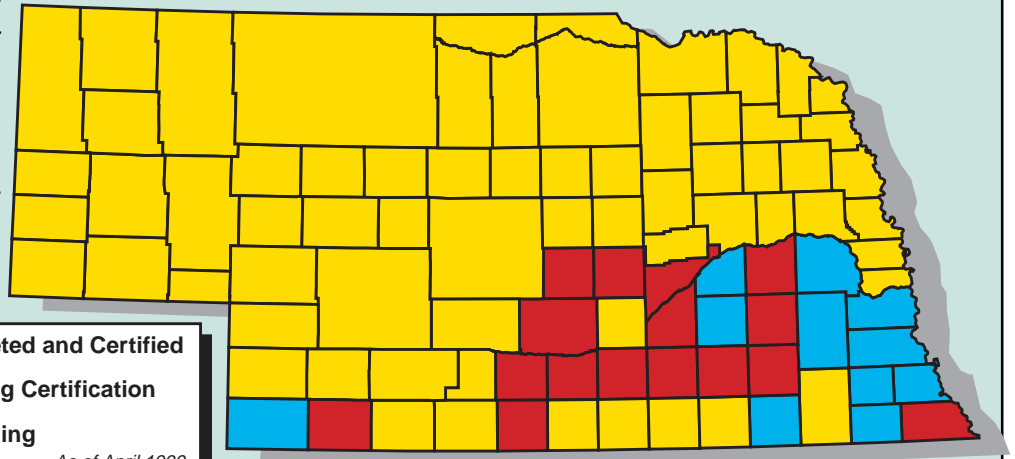
Lancaster was chosen as the pilot county for the project when work began in the summer of 1997. Digitizing has progressed from southeastern Nebraska counties to western counties, depending on the availability of completed DOQ's.

As of April 1999, ten counties are completed and certified, they are **Dundy, Cass, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Polk, Saunders, and York**. **Dundy and Saunders** were completed before the agreement. Seventeen additional counties awaiting certification are **Adams, Buffalo, Butler, Clay, Fillmore, Hamilton, Harlan, Hitchcock, Howard, Kearney, Merrick, Phelps, Richardson, Saline, Seward, Sherman, and York**. Updated soil surveys include the counties of Deuel, Franklin, Gage, Hall, Red Willow and Washington.

**Legend**

- Completed and Certified
- Awaiting Certification
- Remaining

As of April 1999



## Informational Meetings Set For Lower Platte River Study

By Steve Gaul

Informational meetings for the **Lower Platte River and Tributaries Feasibility Study** have been set for the following times and locations:

July 6 - 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. - Mahoney State Park Lodge

July 7 - 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. - Papio-Missouri River NRD Offices, 8901 South 154<sup>th</sup> St., Omaha

July 8 - 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. - North Bend Civic Auditorium

The three meetings are being organized by the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance and will provide updates on study progress regarding: flood mitigation planning, potential levee projects, potential environmental restoration projects, and water quality investigations.

The Lower Platte River and Tributaries Feasibility Study is a multi-agency effort to investigate flood damage reduction and water resources related problems and solutions along the Lower Platte from Columbus to Plattsmouth. Major study participants include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance, Papio-Missouri River NRD, Lower Platte South NRD, Lower Platte North NRD, and Natural Resources Commission.

The Commission is a co-sponsor of the study and has participated in a wide variety of study activities. Recent Commission work has included a major cooperative effort with the Corps and Alliance to assist area communities with flood mitigation planning. Seven area communities and two counties have expressed an interest in a plan. A flood mitigation plan can help

*Continued on page 6*

*(Republican River Litigation Con't)*

In its answer, Nebraska restated its position that the use of groundwater is not governed by the Compact, but further argues that, even if groundwater is somehow involved, it is to be limited to groundwater in the alluvium. In support of its counterclaim, Nebraska argued that northwest Kansas has used more than its allocation in the past, that Kansas has failed to provide data necessary for proper Compact administration the last three years, and that Nebraska has been damaged as a result of those violations. For relief, Nebraska asks for damages and for a declaratory order that Nebraska is entitled to consume, within the Republican River basin, such quantities of water as are not put to beneficial consumptive use in Kansas or Colorado.

Kansas now has an opportunity to respond to Nebraska's answer and counterclaim. The Supreme Court will also likely begin the search for a special master for the case in the near future.

We will include updates of this litigation in future Nebraska Resources as circumstances warrant.



## ***Dedicated to the proper management and utilization of Nebraska's soil and water resources***

NEBRASKA RESOURCES SPRING, 1999/p.6

### *(Lower Platte River Study Con't)*

communities identify problems, realize their vulnerability, and identify possible flood damage-reducing projects (such as floodproofing, acquisition, levee improvements, relocation, or demolition). It may also help qualify a community for lower flood insurance premium rates or other benefits. The Natural Resources Commission administers the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, and may be able to provide financial assistance to communities to which the Corps is unable to provide full assistance. Since 1978, the eight counties that border the Lower Platte have experienced 84% of Nebraska's National Flood Insurance Program repetitive loss claims. (However, that figure includes all of those counties, including land bordering the Missouri River).

The Commission's long term effort has included providing pass-through appropriations for the study as well as extensive staff work on the surveying and mapping portion of the initiative. This work has included developing detailed cross-section data between Interstate 80 and Fremont as well as a recently completed, high-detail digital elevation modeling and mapping for the Fremont Lakes area. Cross-section work on the river reach between Fremont and Rogers is currently underway. The survey and mapping will assist both feasibility study analysis and (through the Corps) a Federal Emergency Management Agency effort to update flood profiles for their Flood Insurance Studies. More information on the Lower Platte River and Tributaries Feasibility Study can be obtained by visiting the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance Website at <http://lowerplatte.nrc.state.ne.us>

### **STATE OF NEBRASKA**

Mike Johanns, Governor

### **NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

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